

MINUTES
RSA/VR and ADE/ESS Interagency Workgroup
February 13, 2002

The RSA/VR and ADE/ESS Interagency Workgroup held a meeting at the Supreme Court building, Teleconference Studio, 1501 W. Washington, Phoenix, Arizona, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Members Present:

Brandon Arterbury, Vocational Rehabilitation
Skip Bingham, Vocational Rehabilitation
Karen Davis, PPEP TEC
Chris Harmon (for Andres Renteria)
Barbara Knox, Vocational Rehabilitation
Debbie Martin (for Larry Powers), Vocational Rehabilitation
Steve Mishlove, Arizona Department of Education
Bill McQueary, Peoria Unified School District
Peggy Mejia, Apache Junction Unified School District
Bill Rabe, Peoria Unified School District
Velma Spencer, Window Rock Unified School District
Craig Warren, Vocational Rehabilitation
Robert Wolf, Parker Unified School District

Others Present:

Doc Williams, OSEP
Wendy Collison
Chris Fuller
Jeannette Zemeida

Members Absent:

Laura Love, SRC

INTRODUCTIONS:

Wendy Collison, Education Program Specialist, Exceptional Student Services, Arizona Department of Education opened meeting, thanked everyone for coming and went over agenda items for the meeting.

Each individual present introduced themselves and the agency they represent.

Everyone received a copy of Transition Requirements by Jane Storms, Ed O'Leary and Jane Williams. Wendy informed the group that a companion document is currently being created to discuss how public education agencies and vocational rehabilitation offices can work more

collaboratively together. The guide will have sample Individualized Education Plans with Individualized Employment Plans for two students to show the connections.

OVERVIEW OF VR AND LEA SYSTEMS

Skip Bingham spoke about the history of the working relationship between Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and schools.

A video containing interviews with transitioning high school students speaking about their job goals was shown. The video is available to all counselors in the state of Arizona.

The bad news for VR is that there is currently a budget crisis. Order of Selection is a priority system that is used when there are not sufficient funds available. There are three categories: individuals with the most significant disabilities; individuals with significant needs; and then all others (15% of population).

The individuals who truly have the most significant disabilities need long-term support after leaving school. Budget constraints are making this difficult. Currently there are very few new individuals being accepted into this program due the budget constraints. The funding is coming only from the state.

The vocational rehabilitation program and the schools need to get creative and form relationships with their communities to continue to provide long-term support for these individuals. This is not an easy task.

The new federal Social Security Ticket to Work Program will be coming out next year. There are some small possibilities of getting creative with this program. There may be a possibility of finding employers who are willing to become employment networks to hire individuals and receive the social security reimbursement payments in lieu of getting a job coach.

This program might be one of the programs that this workgroup could investigate within the next year.

Skip fielded questions from the group regarding VR.

The Order of Selection worksheet is done. Skip provided a copy to everyone for viewing and discussion. He explained how the document would be used to evaluate students with disabilities. Counselors trained in how to use the Order of Selection worksheet will use this document.

Steve Mishlove spoke about the history of transition, from the Vespers document (which he helped work on) to today's transition efforts.

There are currently about 100,700 eligible students under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This is an approximate 4 percent increase over last year.

Steve explained that the Arizona Department of Education (ADE), unlike VR, does not provide any direct services to students with disabilities. That is the responsibility of the public education agencies (PEAs). ADE's main responsibilities are to help PEAs implement the laws and regulations. The primary responsibility is general supervision. This means going out and monitoring the schools and charter schools. Another responsibility is technical assistance.

One of the purposes of the IDEA is to prepare students through the provision of special education and related services for employment and adult living. Under IDEA ADE and Exceptional Student Services (ESS) is required to collaborate with other agencies. ESS considers this an essential part of IDEA.

Steve talked about several grants that PEAs can apply for to help with transition education.

There is a special transition training taking place in Phoenix at the end of March. One hundred school districts/charter schools were randomly selected throughout the state and invited to the training. Ed O'Leary and Wendy Collison will be facilitating the training.

OVERVIEW OF THE INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT

VR does not have any financial relationships with charter schools. They will assign a liaison counselor to charter schools. From a legal standpoint, VR has not figured out yet how to have financial agreements with charter schools.

It was suggested that the workgroup possibly look into this issue.

Wendy and Chris Fuller gave a presentation on "Meeting the Transition Challenge Together: ADE and RSA Collaborations".

PURPOSE OF THE WORKGROUP AND STUDENT SELECTION

The purpose of the workgroup is to review the Interagency Agreement (IA) on a yearly basis and recommend any changes that may be needed.

Subcommittees were developed based on Section XII of IA. The following points were discussed with participants assigned as appropriate:

1. Review and Evaluate statewide compliance with the terms of the agreement.
 - a. Statement re: AIMS/high school diploma
 - b. Review of current contracts aligned to state agreement
 - c. Establish baseline on agreement

How to use it
How to contact VR/LEA
Services in area

2. Develop recommendations for the resolution of operational issues
 - a. Charter school involvement with access to VR
 - b. Redistribution of contracts/funds
5. Make recommendations regarding continuing or amending the Interagency Agreement once a year.
 - a. Follow along/follow up services revisited and put into IA
6. Develop subcommittees, as necessary.

Item 1: Review and Evaluate

Alan Price (suggested by Skip Bingham)
Chris Fuller
Wendy Collison

Item 2: Develop Recommendations

Bill McQueary
Chris Harmon

Item 2a: Charter School Involvement

Karen Davis
Chris Fuller
Wendy Collison
Pete Vargas

Student Selection

The following members volunteered to find students to include in workgroup:

School District – Urban – Bill McQueary
School District – Rural – Velma Spencer
VR – Rural (working) – Debra Martin
VR – Urban – Barbara Knox

Other possible members:

Secure Care – Sharon Relation (Wendy Collison)
Behavioral Health Services – Robin Tresh (Wendy Collison)

DDD – (Skip)

Business Leadership Network – (Skip)

SET NEXT MEETING DATE AND AGENDA

It was decided to meet quarterly. The next meeting will be held May 8, 2002, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm., Arizona Department of Education, Room 417, 1535 W. Jefferson, Phoenix, AZ.

A separate meeting for new members will be held from 9:00 – 10:00, before regular meeting.

Items suggested for next agenda: subcommittee, updates for new members.